

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1172  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Wivell, *et al.*)

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Election Law - Absentee Ballot Envelopes - Party Affiliation

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This bill establishes that language or information that visibly identifies the party affiliation of a voter may not be included on an outgoing absentee ballot envelope, an absentee ballot return envelope, or an absentee ballot return envelope template provided by a local board of elections to a voter who is sent an absentee ballot through the Internet or by facsimile transmission. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2022.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill does not affect State finances, since the requirements reflect current practice.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** An absentee ballot sent by mail must be enclosed in specially printed envelopes, the form and content of which must be prescribed by the State Board of Elections. A local board of elections may use either two envelopes (“outgoing envelope” and “ballot/return envelope”) or three envelopes (“outgoing envelope,” “return envelope,” and “ballot envelope”). The ballot/return envelope or the return envelope must include prepaid postage.

If an absentee ballot is sent by the Internet or facsimile transmission, the local board must provide the voter with an envelope template.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 746 of 2021 passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 989 (Senator Ellis) - Rules.

**Information Source(s):** Howard and Montgomery counties; State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 4, 2022  
fnu2/hlb

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Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:

(410) 946-5510

(301) 970-5510